



A THRONE FOR TWO: IMAGE OF THE DIVINE COUPLE DURING AKHENATEN'S REIGN

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ABSTRACT

A few representations of a divine couple enthroned, the female figure sitting in the lap of the male, have survived in Mesopotamian iconography, on terracotta and stone plaques, on the Ur-Namma stela from Ur, and on a Syrian cylinder seal of the 19th–18th centuries BCE. In Egypt, the motif is mostly restricted to the reign of Akhenaten, with a few objects probably figuring Akhenaten and Nefertiti in this fashion. The ancient oriental motif may have traveled to Egypt at a time when Mesopotamian mythological texts were used in Amarna schools, and other motifs of eastern origin seem to have been favored. The representation of a divine/royal couple sharing the same throne in a position usually reserved in Mesopotamian and Egyptian art for an adult figure with a child hints at a shared thematic surrounding the throne as a royal emblem, a locus of divine apparition and erotic symbolism.

The unusual motif of a queen sitting in a king's lap appears unexpectedly in Egypt during Akhenaten's reign (second half of the 14th century BCE) and is attested only in the domain of Akhetaten (modern Tell el-Amarna), founded in the fifth year of his reign.¹ The motif seems to disappear from the royal repertoire with Akhenaten's politico-religious and iconographic revolution, apparently bound to his own vision of kingship as opposed to the traditional representation of the enthroned king. Though often discussed since the discovery of the artifacts bearing the motif,² a clear understanding of its implications and of the origin of this singular image of kingship is still missing.

The motif appears on the fragment of limestone panel Louvre E 11624 (24.7 x 34 x 4.9 cm)³ from a domestic locus in Amarna,⁴ presenting an enthroned king with a woman in his lap and at least two children on her knees (Fig. 1). Though all cartouches and the

upper body of the royal pair are lost with the missing upper part of the panel, the identification of Akhenaten and Nefertiti on this high-quality relief

FIGURE 1: Panel Louvre E 11624 © Musée du Louvre/C. Décamps; reconstruction after Norman de Garis Davies, "The Graphic Work of the Expedition," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 18 (1923): fig. 4.



is undoubted: their silhouette, attire, and the position of the princesses in the queen's lap are well-attested on other representations of the royal family, and the chair is clearly a throne adorned with its traditional motif of the union of the Two Lands.

On the unfinished limestone statue Cairo JE 44866 (39.5 x 16 x 21.5 cm),⁵ from a sculptor's house, a woman is sitting in a king's lap on a high-backed chair. The identification of Akhenaten wearing his blue *hprš* crown is not contested, while the female figure has been identified as Queen Nefertiti, one of their daughters, or Kiya, a secondary wife of Akhenaten. The female figure does not wear a cobra at the front of her "Nubian" wig, which would seem to exclude Nefertiti;⁶ the wig is not worn by Akhenaten's daughters depicted as children,⁷ and no example of a princess sitting in the king's lap is otherwise known.⁸ The woman cups the king's elbow with her left hand, a gesture that may denote sexual intimacy, though it is not always the case,⁹ while embracing his torso with the right arm; the king's right hand is on the woman's chest¹⁰ and his left is on her upper back. Their lips are joined, probably due to the unfinished state of the item,¹¹ and the piece was discarded for unknown reasons.

One may tentatively add to the list of objects representing Nefertiti in Akhenaten's lap three fragmentary pieces showing royal figures facing each other:

- the Nile mud seal Berlin ÄM 21331 (2 x 2.2 x 0.8 cm),¹² from a sculptor's house: the small, irregular artifact does not permit one to discern irrefutably if Nefertiti (with "Nubian" wig and cobra) sits in Akhenaten's lap (the figure under Aten's rays); a princess stands by their side;
- the fragment of limestone shrine panel Berlin ÄM 14511 (12.7 x 9.8 x 1.4 cm),¹³ purchased, dated of the end of Akhenaten's reign (years 12/14–17 on the basis of the Protocol III of Aten inscribed beside the divine epithets), with only the heads of Akhenaten and Nefertiti and the king's upper chest, facing each other; the king is certainly sitting with his right arm on the throne's back, but the queen may be standing in front of him or sitting in his lap;¹⁴
- the limestone block Brooklyn Access. No. 34.6052 (22.5 x 7.5 x 53.8 cm)¹⁵ from the Great Aten Temple in Amarna, though only the heads of the royal couple are represented on the block; the queen was sitting in the king's lap or both were standing.¹⁶

The motif of a queen in her spouse's lap is not attested before Amarna. As in Mesopotamia, sitting in the lap is traditionally construed as a parent/child motif, with a god,¹⁷ goddess, queen, nurse, or tutor supporting a royal child. In Egypt the motif expresses the royal or divine maternity/paternity of the king or emphasizes the closely bound and highly honorific charge of the nurse/tutor of a prince.

Nefertiti sitting in Akhenaten's lap on the Louvre panel has been understood by scholars in two ways:

- a. the king functioning as a parental figure in a variant of the mother-child paradigm,¹⁸ perhaps indicating kingship transmission¹⁹ with the queen in the role of the child;
- b. an image of *hieros gamos*, the king fulfilling the divine role in the god-queen paradigm²⁰ visually implemented in the New Kingdom, still in a more "proper" version, between Amun and the queen mother of Hatshepsut or of Amenhotep III (Fig. 2).²¹ In this Amunian model, Hatshepsut and Amenhotep III occupy the position of the child of Amun. But applied to Akhenaten and Nefertiti, it transforms the king into a divine father and the queen into his spouse, the princesses taking the place of the royal child.

The divine union hypothesis was championed by Wildung who found support for it in a Dynasty 26 faience statuette (from Karnak?) representing Amun holding in his lap the "God's Wife and Divine (solar) Daughter/Adoratrice Amenirdis (I)."²² On the other hand, Arnold suggested as evidence of the mother-child paradigm that the pavilion structure around the scene of the Louvre panel resembles the "birth bower" in nursing scenes depicted on New Kingdom ostraca;²³ the fruit and flowers on the stand may further connote fertility.

Father-daughter and consorts relationships are certainly not mutually exclusive, for the bipolar daughter-wife of the god model is well attested for the queen from the Old Kingdom on: the queen is conceptualized as a solar daughter (*šst ntr*), especially in the cult of Amun.²⁴ Troy contends that the "sexual relationship between the king and his consort is (...) equated with the relationship between the god and his daughter."²⁵ Perhaps this ancient tradition was elaborated by Atenism (the doctrine of the god Aten imposed by Akhenaten) in the new image of the queen in the king's lap, in which the

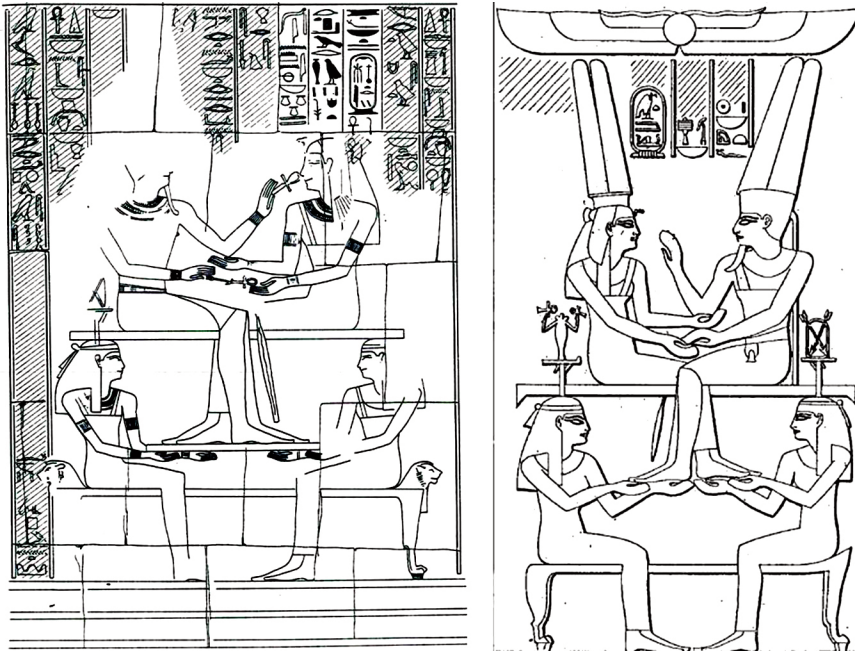


FIGURE 2: Deir el-Bahari and Luxor *hieros gamos*, after Naville 1896, pl. 47 and Gayet 1894, pl. 63.

king played the role of the nursing divine and solar father-spouse of Nefertiti. On the other hand, one should note that the mother-child paradigm was abundantly used in Amarna iconography with the multiple representations of princesses in Nefertiti's lap²⁶ or a nurse's,²⁷ as well as in Tutankhamun's imagery after Akhenaten's reign (in the tomb of his nurse Maia).²⁸

Bayer and Eaton-Krauss have argued against the image of theogamy in Amarna because the motif of the queen's hymen with Amun in Dynasty 18's mortuary temples of Hatshepsut and Amenhotep III (both "restored" during the Ramesside Period) involves a bed, not a high-backed chair.²⁹ Indeed, the divine union is not visually consummated in Deir el-Bahari and Luxor on a throne, but not immediately on the bed either, since two goddesses elevate the couple to the sky for a heavenly hymen:³⁰ Amun and the queen are seated on an indistinct surface in Deir el-Bahari and on the sky hieroglyph in Luxor, above the bed on which the goddesses who elevate or support their feet are seated. The sitting position of the royal couple and of the goddesses reinforces the analogy between royal bed and throne, both being "high places" of choice for a divine epiphany. Certainly, in pre-Atenist tradition the bed/bier and

its headrest connote sky and rising sun;³¹ similarly the throne (*st wrrt*) elevates the ruler as Ra rising (*hⁱ*) above his primeval hill.³² thus Hatshepsut is "rising on the seat of Horus like Ra" (*hⁱ hr st Hr mi Rⁱ*).³³ In Amarna, the royal chariot, the carrying chair, the royal bed, and the throne are all high places of royal epiphany, perpetrating the tradition to refer to the king in terms of a solar rising. Thus Akhenaten is rising (*hⁱ*) "on the seat of Ra [the throne] for the living ones, like his father Aten,"³⁴ "on a great chariot (*wrryt*) of electrum like Aten when he rises from his horizon,"³⁵ and "on the great carrying chair (*k{t}3yt*) of

electrum."³⁶ No mention of the royal bed is made in Atenist textual compositions; but the Great Hymn to Aten uses the image of morning as rebirth for the sleeper rising with the sun.³⁷ Visually, the royal bed 𓏏 is also a "high place" (as the elevated throne) reached with a stepladder.³⁸ In the absence of the royal figure, the bed and the throne may be graced by a hovering Aten shining on them,³⁹ a fact that reflects a common symbolic value with the illuminated throne and bed standing for the king and queen. Remarkably, these favorite epiphany loci are shared by the royal couple in Amarna in unconventional visuals, sometimes with their offspring: the sharing of the throne is reflected in the sharing of the chariot,⁴⁰ bed,⁴¹ and carrying chair.⁴² In some of these representations the couple also share a breath-to-breath moment with Aten, who places between their noses the sign of life. This nose-to-nose joining (it is not really a kiss on the lips)⁴³ and its revivifying connotations, not always sexual, is represented in Amarna between Akhenaten and Nefertiti (on the chariot,⁴⁴ on the throne,⁴⁵ and in unclear context),⁴⁶ between Akhenaten and his eldest daughter or secondary wife Kiya (?) on the throne,⁴⁷ and between Nefertiti and some of her daughters on the throne, at the window of appearance, and in unknown context.⁴⁸ And again, the nose-to-nose breathing by the royal couple of an *nh* sign extended by Aten offers a more intimate picture than Amun's presentation of these signs to the nose and hand of

the queen in Hatshepsut's version of the *hieros gamos* (to the nose of the queen in Luxor).⁴⁹

It remains to assert the impetus for this departure from the traditional repertoire of royal images, allowing the queen to sit in the lap of the king in a more visually erotic version of their union. Sharing the throne, close sexual contact, fusion of the traditional images of the child and of the father are revolutionary and were never canonized in Egypt, even considering the isolated Dynasty 26 avatar of Amun and Amenirdis. As far as we know, sitting in the lap was never used before in Egypt to convey an erotic

situation, neither visually nor textually; Amun's and the queen-mother's closely-entwined knees (a "hearsay type" of union)⁵⁰ in pre-Atenist images of the *hieros gamos* sufficiently referred to heavenly sexual intercourse. A foreign visual tradition may have triggered this iconographic development in Amarna, conflating with similar Egyptian ideas never blatantly expressed in royal imagery and explaining the sudden use of a throne instead of a bed in the iconography of divine union. The motif was perhaps imported, quite late, from an ancient Mesopotamian erotic model of divine love represented since the Ur III Period (lap-sitting being a euphemism for sexual intercourse)⁵¹ and later attested in the Levant. The motif may have found its way to Egypt through Syrian seals such as a non-provenanced Syrian cylinder seal from the 19th–18th c. BCE (*BnF* 431, Fig. 3).⁵²

Another Syrian seal of similar dating presents a divine couple sitting on a camel, the god touching the goddess's knee.⁵³ Though they predate the Amarna Period by about four centuries, they may represent a small part of the seals produced with this motif, and such small items may have traveled extensively. The importance of the seal-vehicle during Dynasty 18 and its evolving politico-religious motifs should not be underestimated;⁵⁴ indeed, a non-provenanced 14th-century BCE Egypto-Syrian seal presents Akhenaten's father Amenhotep III with cartouche, *hprš* headgear, in smiting action and his queen *Tiy* with her double feather headdress, in the context of Near Eastern elements and stylistics.⁵⁵

An additional source of foreign inspiration



FIGURE 3: Syrian cylinder seal *BnF* 431, after Winter 1983, fig. 371.

regarding the bed-throne motif may well be the Old Hittite Kingdom imagery appearing on a group of sixteenth-century BCE polychrome relief vases from the province of Çorum in central Anatolia. On the Bitik⁵⁶ and Inandik⁵⁷ vases, royal couples are seated on a bed-throne (a type of couch), and in the upper register of the Inandik vase, an intimate scene above the couch evinces the sexual connotation of the bed-throne. A similar theme is depicted on vase A from Hüseyindede,⁵⁸ but here another facet of the Hittite-Egyptian connection is illustrated by a couple riding in a wagon connected to the figures on the bed-throne. However, the gender of the two figures cannot be ascertained—they could be two women.⁵⁹

Another possible conduit for this theogamy motif would be through literary compositions, since the lap-sitting metaphor alluding to intimate relations is a well-known trope in the cuneiform tradition. For instance in *Dumuzi's Dream*,⁶⁰ Dumuzi plays and dances in the holy lap of Inanna. In *Ningirsu and Baba*,⁶¹ Ningirsu's radiant entry into the temple is compared to dawn, with the chariot, the throne, and the bed mentioned successively, all loci of royal epiphany to which the Egyptians could easily relate. Indeed, the Amarna archives contained copies of literary compositions such as the *Myth of Adapa and the South Wind* (EA 356) or the *Myth of Nergal and Erishkigal* (EA 357),⁶² the latter being especially relevant to our topic. In Sultantepe's version of *Nergal and Erishkigal*,⁶³ the throne and the bed both

feature in the context of the couple's divine encounter.

Atenist iconography goes a step further than the Mesopotamian model by placing two princesses on top of Nefertiti's lap when she sits on the king's knees in the unique Louvre panel. The child-like position (inferiority) of the queen in Akhenaten's lap⁶⁴ is reflected in the posture of the princesses, the all-mighty enthroned king bearing them all. The motif corresponds to a theogamy that supposedly takes place under Aten's radiant embrace, the fertility of the royal couple evinced by the presence of the princesses. There is no clue as to the part of the reign during which the motif was adopted in Amarna: the Cairo statuette bears no text and the Louvre panel has lost its upper part that should have been engraved with Aten's Protocol. Arnold⁶⁵ deems it a later monument "because of its extremely sophisticated composition," recalling later reliefs in Amarna; but complexity is not an absolute indicator in dating Atenist iconography (see e.g. the complex large scene on wall A of room alpha in the royal tomb, dated by the earliest Protocol of Aten). Nevertheless, Arnold's view is adopted by Fitzenreiter⁶⁶ who believes that the panel was carved circa Year 12 and that the royal couple on the chair indicates a delegation of duties⁶⁷ to the queen, the lion-pawed throne being the seat of a dead king. But the position in the lap marks a child-like, hence inferior, status of the queen in the iconographic language, not necessarily a political delegation, and thrones with lion legs await Akhenaten and his consort in the depictions of the palace found in the private tombs of Amarna, which suggests their use as ceremonial thrones by the living couple.⁶⁸

Other elements of Atenist iconography are typically foreign: Susanne Bickel proposed that the motif of the sun above an empty throne came from Mitanni.⁶⁹ A representation of musicians in flounced garments and conical headgear, playing handheld lyres, lutes, and a giant standing lyre⁷⁰ appears in banquet scenes, in conjunction with the representation of a female Egyptian orchestra. In ancient Near East visuals there is no exact correspondence of identically garbed musicians with the giant lyre (e.g. on the Inandik vase),⁷¹ and their origin (Mesopotamian?⁷² Hurrito-Mitannian? Hittite?)⁷³ remains unclear. The motif may be a loan from ancient Near Eastern myths and rituals, adopted by Atenism to enhance the divine ontology of the royal couple in particular circumstances. What remains is that the foreign-looking orchestra is

further evidence of Atenist artists' interest in non-Egyptian literary and iconographic motifs, supporting our understanding of the motif of the Egyptian queen in the royal lap.

Sitting in the lap and knees touching/intertwining are visual markers of intimacy with a long iconographic history, and one may wonder if further variants of these motifs were not celebrated in later artistic productions. For instance, Steinberg believed that an antique model underlay the "slung-leg motif" during the Renaissance (the leg of a figure slung over the thigh(s) of a member of the opposite sex when sitting side-by-side), and proposed seeing in the Derveni krater (4th century BCE, Thessaloniki AM B1) one of its ancient manifestations.⁷⁴ One side of the krater depicts the blissful Ariadne and Dionysus, sitting side-by-side, a naked Dionysus with his right leg slung into his spouse's lap. Indeed, Barr-Sharrar interprets the god's leg thrown over Ariadne's lap on the krater as a "visual innuendo of Ariadne's sensuality combined with the aggressive intimacy of the naked god" emphasizing the sexual aspects of their union;⁷⁵ the explicit position is clearly linked to the staged intimacy referred to by Xenophon in *Symposium* 9.4, a scene in which Dionysus "in a most loving manner" sits himself in Ariadne's lap.⁷⁶ Thus theogamy is alluded to by the slung-leg motif in the context of the epiphany of the god on the krater and by lap-sitting in the theatrical performance; these visuals match the emphasis laid on the lap/knee in the context of divine love in the ancient Near East and Egypt. Moreover, Steinberg questions the possibility of a similar meaning of the slung-leg in Michelangelo's *Pietà* and in his depictions of the Virgin and Child since "bestriding a woman's thigh is an unmistakable gesture of male appropriation,"⁷⁷ thus again linking the two paradigms of mother-child and god-spouse which were intimately related in the ancient pictorials studied here.

In ancient Egypt, sexual intimacy could be conveyed by various images, e.g. nose-to-nose breathing (though not necessarily), sitting together on or standing together beside a bed,⁷⁸ embracing, cupping the elbow, touching the chin or interlocking fingers,⁷⁹ intertwining legs/knees and touching hands, and lap-sitting—besides engaging in sex lying on a bed⁸⁰ or in other circumstances.⁸¹ The slung-leg does not appear to be part of the visuals of sexual intimacy in the Egyptian repertoire as it does in the Greco-Roman world and during the Renaissance, and the "settled intimacy of the lap-

sitting pose”⁸² introduced by Atenist royal iconography on the basis of an Eastern model remains the most daring theogamy depiction allowed in pharaonic Egypt.

¹ This paper was triggered by the many wonderful discussions Tallay Ornan and I had during our three-year research project financed by the *Mandel Scholion Interdisciplinary Research Center in the Humanities of the Hebrew University*. We analyzed the continuity of kings’ and rulers’ iconography in the Middle East from the beginnings of history to pre-modern times.

² See, e.g., Cyril Aldred, *Akhenaten and Nefertiti* (New York: Brooklyn Museum/Viking Press, 1973), 134; Dietrich Wildung, “Nouveaux aspects de la femme en Égypte pharaonique: Résultats scientifiques d’une exposition,” *Bulletin de la Société française d’Égyptologie* 102 (1985): 20–25; Rolf Krauss, “Die amarnazeitliche Familienstele Berlin 14145 unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Maßordnung und Komposition,” *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 33 (1991): 13–14; Dorothea Arnold, *The Royal Women of Amarna: Images of Beauty from Ancient Egypt* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), 102–104; Martin Fitzenreiter, “*ꜥḥ n jtn* als *ꜥḥ n jkr n rꜥ*: Die königlichen Familienstelen und die religiöse Praxis in Amarna,” *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur* 37 (2008): 97; Christian J. Bayer and Marianne Eaton-Krauss, “The Amarna Triad,” *Revue d’Égyptologie* 63 (2012): 28–32.

³ Arnold 1996, fig. 93.

⁴ Matthew F. Petrie, *Tell el Amarna* (London: Methuen, 1894), 40–41, pl. 1 n.16; Aldred 1973, 134.

⁵ Arnold 1996, fig. 96.

⁶ Marianne Eaton-Krauss, “Miscellanea Amarnensia,” *Chronique d’Égypte* 56 (1981): 257–258; Bayer and Eaton-Krauss 2012, 28–29.

⁷ Eaton-Krauss 1981, 257.

⁸ On the Berlin ÄM 14145 panel (Arnold 1996, fig. 88) the king cradles princess *Mrititn* in his arms high up, in a way recalling Amun-Ra’s cradling of Amenhotep III in Luxor (Helmut Brunner, *Die Geburt des Gottkönigs: Studien zur Überlieferung*

eines altägyptischen Mythos [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1964], pl. 11).

⁹ See, e.g., the New Kingdom theogamy scenes in Edouard Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari II* (London: EEF, Kegan Paul, Quaritch, 1896), pl. 47; Albert Gayet, *Le Temple de Louxor: Constructions d’Aménophis III* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1894), pl. 63; Brunner 1964, 35 and pl. 4; Wildung 1985, 24. But in *Ḳnimmn*’s tomb TT 93 (Norman De Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Ken-Amun at Thebes II* [New York: MMA, 1930], pl. 9A) Amenhotep II is sitting in the lap of his nurse and her left hand cups his elbow.

¹⁰ A gesture usually attested for the figure in the lap, e.g. the prince *Wꜥdms*, son of Thutmose I, sitting on the knees of his tutor *Pꜥḥry* in the tomb of *Pꜥḥry* in El Kab (Joseph J. Taylor and Francis L. Griffith, *The Tomb of Paheri at El Kab* [London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1894], pl. 4).

¹¹ The only case of lips touching is depicted on Brooklyn 60.197.8 between Nefertiti and her daughter (Rita E. Freed, Yvonne J. Markowitz and Sue H. D’Auria, *Pharaohs of the Sun: Akhenaten, Nefertiti, Tutankhamen* [Boston: Museum of Fine Arts & Bulfinch Press, 1999], fig. 63).

¹² Günther Roeder, “Thronfolger und König Smench-ka-Rê (Dynastie XVIII),” *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 83 (1958): 48 fig. 1; Rolf Krauss, *Das Ende der Amarnazeit: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Chronologie des Neuen Reiches* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1978), 103–104; “Eine Regentin, ein König und eine Königin zwischen dem Tod von Achenaten und der Thronbesteigung von Tutankhaten,” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 34 (2007): 299–300 figs. 3, 4 a–b; Friederike Seyfried (ed.), *In the Light of Amarna: 100 Years of the Nefertiti Discovery* (Berlin: Staatliche Museen, 2012), 370–371.

¹³ Arnold 1996, 104 fig. 98.

¹⁴ For two proposed reconstructions of the stela, see Bernhard Riefeling, “Rekonstruktionsversuche von Armana-Flachbildern II. Die Halskragenstele Berlin ÄM 14511,” *Göttinger Miszellen* 239 (2013): figs. 3–4.

¹⁵ Bayer and Eaton-Krauss 2012.

¹⁶ Bayer and Eaton-Krauss 2012, 32–33.

¹⁷ See, e.g., *PT* 553 §1367c (P. 611) for the king sitting on the great throne in his father’s lap (*ḥms.f ḥr st*

- wrt hr mnty it.f) in James P. Allen, *A New Concordance of the Pyramid Texts* (Providence: Brown University, 2013).
- ¹⁸ Arnold 1996, 104.
- ¹⁹ Roeder 1958, 48.
- ²⁰ Wildung 1985, 20–25; Krauss 1991, 13–14.
- ²¹ Naville 1896, pl. 47; Gayet 1894, pl. 63; Brunner 1964, pl. 4. See also the union between Amun-Ra and the mother of Ramses II depicted on two blocks from the Ramesseum reused in Medinet Habu (Brunner 1964, pls. 16, 24a; Gaballa A. Gaballa, “New Evidence on the Birth of Pharaoh,” *Orientalia* 36 [1967]: pl. 63 fig. 1; Benoît Lurson, “Nouveaux éléments sur la décoration et l’architecture du temple contigu au Ramesseum,” *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur* 39 (2010): 247.
- ²² Cairo CG 42199 in Georges Legrain, “Sur un groupe d’Amon et d’Améniritis I^{re},” *Recueil de Travaux* 31 (1909): 139–142; *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du musée du Caire Nos 42192–42250: Statues et statuettes de rois et de particuliers III* (Cairo: IFAO, 1914), 8–9, pl. 7.
- ²³ Arnold 1996, 99–100.
- ²⁴ Lana Troy, *Patterns of Queenship in Ancient Egyptian Myth and History* (Uppsala: Boreas, 1986), 61 and 97–99.
- ²⁵ Troy 1986, 100.
- ²⁶ See, e.g., the limestone panel Berlin ÄM 14145 in Arnold 1996, fig. 88.
- ²⁷ Bayer and Eaton-Krauss 2012, fig. 6a for the seal Berlin ÄM 36557 and fig. 8 reconstruction around Louvre E 27150.
- ²⁸ Alain Zivie, *La tombe de Maïa: Mère nourricière du roi Toutânkhamon et grande du harem* (Toulouse: Caracara, 2009), pls. 21, 52–53.
- ²⁹ Bayer and Eaton-Krauss 2012, 29.
- ³⁰ Brunner 1964, 38–42 believes the restored ensembles in Deir el-Bahari and Luxor indicate a Ramesside misunderstanding of an Old Kingdom depiction of a bed on which all the figures are seated.
- ³¹ Jean Yoyotte, “Lion,” in Georges Posener (ed.), *Dictionnaire de la civilisation égyptienne* (Paris: Fernand Hazan, 1970), 151–152; Bart R. Hellinckx, “The Symbolic Assimilation of Head and Sun as Expressed by Headrests,” *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur* 29 (2001): 90.
- ³² Klaus P. Kuhlmann, “Throne,” in Willeke Wendrich (ed.), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles: scholarship, 2011), <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8xc7k559>, 4, accessed 18 November 2016.
- ³³ Edouard Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari I* (London: EEF, Kegan Paul, Quaritch, 1895), pl. 19; see also e.g. *Urk. IV* 80 line 3 on the enthronement of Thutmose I: *ḥꜥ m ni-swt bity hr st Hr* “rising as King of Upper and Lower Egypt on the seat of Horus.” (Kurt Sethe and Wolfgang Helck, *Urkunden der 18 Dynastie: Historisch-biographische Urkunden* [Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs and Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1927–1961]).
- ³⁴ Boundary stelae of Year 5 in William J. Murnane and Charles C. Van Siclen III, *The Boundary Stelae of Akhenaten* (London/New York: Kegan Paul International, 1993), 19 line 5; *Mryrꜥ II’s Amarna tomb* in Maj Sandman, *Texts from the Time of Akhenaten* (Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Elisabeth, 1938), 29 line 14: *ḥꜥ [hm.f] hr st it.f pꜣ [It]n* “rising [of His Person] on the throne of his father the Aten.”
- ³⁵ Murnane and Van Siclen 1993, 19 and 86; variants on Year 8 addition p. 97, and boundary tablet L pl. 16: *ḥꜥy hm.f (hr htri) hr wrryt ꜣt nt dꜥmw mi Itn wbn.f m ꜣht.f*.
- ³⁶ *Hwyꜣ’s tomb*, Sandman 1938, 36 last line: *ḥꜥ ni-swt bity (...) hr k{t}ꜣyt ꜣt n dꜥmw*. The hapax *ktꜣyt* is probably misspelled, from *kꜣi* “high” (see *kꜣyt* “highlands” in the later boundary stelae: Murnane and Van Siclen 1993, 94 lines 1–6).
- ³⁷ Jan Assmann, “Akhanyati’s Theology of Light and Time,” *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 7/4 (1992): 171–172.
- ³⁸ Karnak talatat 31/216 and 31/203 in Claude Traunecker, “Aménophis IV et Néfertiti: le couple royal d’après les talatates du IXe pylône de Karnak,” *Bulletin de la Société française d’Égyptologie* 107 (1986): 36 fig. 11; in the Amarna tomb of *Tꜥhms*, see Norman De Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna III* (London: EEF, Kegan Paul, etc., 1905), pl. 34.
- ³⁹ See e.g. in the tomb of *Pꜣrnnfr* (Norman De Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna VI* [London: EEF, Kegan Paul, etc., 1908], pl. 4).

- ⁴⁰ Davies 1905, pls. 32–32A; Norman De Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna IV* (London: EEF, Kegan Paul, etc., 1906), pls. 20, 22.
- ⁴¹ On the Karnak talatat 31/216 and 31/203 in Traunecker 1986, 36 fig. 11.
- ⁴² Davies 1905, pl. 13 in the tomb of *Hwy*³.
- ⁴³ Sylva Harst, *Der Kuss in den Religionen der Alten Welt: ca. 3000 v. Chr. – 381 n. Chr.* (Münster: LIT, 2004), esp. 39–41.
- ⁴⁴ In the tombs of *M'hw* and *T'hms* in Amarna (Davies 1906, pls. 20, 22 and 1905, pls. 32–32A).
- ⁴⁵ Panel Berlin ÄM 14511; seal Berlin ÄM 21331 (?).
- ⁴⁶ Plaque Fitzwilliam E.GA.4606-1943 = FM 59058 (Freed, Markowitz and D'Auria 1999, 246–247 n.138); block Brooklyn 34.6052.
- ⁴⁷ Berlin ÄM 14145; Cairo JE 44866.
- ⁴⁸ Block Brooklyn 60.197.8, panel Louvre E 11624, relief Cairo JE 66715 (Bayer and Eaton-Krauss 2012, fig. 5); scene of the window of appearance in *Yy*'s Amarna tomb (Davies 1908, pl. 29).
- ⁴⁹ Brunner 1964, pl. 4.
- ⁵⁰ Leo Steinberg, “The Slung-Leg Motif: The Metaphors of Love and Birth in Michelangelo’s *Pietàs*,” in Theodore Bowie and Cornelia V. Christenson (eds.), *Studies in Erotic Art* (New York/London: Basic Books, 1970), 272 on a couple’s intertwined legs in Renaissance art suggesting “knowledge of the symbol but not of its visual form.”
- ⁵¹ Tallay Ornan, “Divine Love: Nanna, Ningal and their Entourage on a Clay Plaque,” in Wayne Horowitz, Uri Gabbay and Filip Vukosavović (eds.), *A Woman of Valor: Jerusalem Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Joan Goodnick Westenholz* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2010), 121 and 128 for two stone plaques from Tello (Louvre AO 58 and Istanbul AM 5552), the Ur-Namma stela from Ur (UPM CBS 16676.14), and an Ur III clay plaque in the Israel Museum 2000.24.62.
- ⁵² Louis-Joseph Delaporte, *Catalogue des cylindres orientaux et des cachets assyro-babyloniens, perses et syro-cappadociens de la Bibliothèque nationale* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1910), 239 n. 431 and pl. 29; Urs Winter, *Frau und Göttin: Exegetische und ikonographische Studien zum weiblichen Gottesbild im Alten Israel und in dessen Umwelt* (Fribourg/Göttingen: Academic Press Fribourg/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), fig. 371; Ornan 2010, fig. 11.
- ⁵³ Edith Porada, “A Cylinder Seal with a Camel in the Walters Art Gallery,” *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 36 (1977): 2 fig. 1; Ornan 2010, fig. 12.
- ⁵⁴ See Susanne Bickel, “Der leere Thron Echnatons. Zur Ikonographie der Amarnazeit,” in Susanne Bickel, Silvia Schroer, René Schurte and Christoph Uehlinger (eds.), *Bilder als Quellen – Images as Sources: Studies on Ancient Near Eastern Artefacts and the Bible Inspired by the Work of Othmar Keel* (Fribourg/Göttingen: Academic Press Fribourg/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 207–210 for the motif of the sun above an empty throne in Amarna and Mitanni.
- ⁵⁵ Collection Armand Trampitsch, Lot 315 in Silke Roth and Uta König, “Ein syrisches Siegel als Zeugnis der Heiratspolitik Amenophis’ III.? Von der interdisziplinären Annäherung an ein extraordinäres Objekt,” in Walter Bisang, Thomas Bierschenk, Detlev Kreikenbom and Ursula Verhoeven, *Kultur, Sprache, Kontakt* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2004), 342–343; see Christian Bayer, *Die den Herrn Beider Länder mit ihrer Schönheit erfreut Teje: Eine ikonographische Studie* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz & Franz Philipp Rutzen, 2014), 371–375 Doc. 90 and pl. 85e for remarks.
- ⁵⁶ Tahsin Özgüç, “The Bitik Vase,” *Anatolia* 2 (1957): fig. 2.
- ⁵⁷ Tahsin Özgüç, *Inandktepe: Eski hitit çağında önemli bir kültür merkezi. An Important Cult Center in the Old Hittite Period* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1988), fig. 64.
- ⁵⁸ Tayfun Yıldırım, “New Scenes on the Second Relief Vase from Hüseyindede and Their Interpretation in Light of the Hittite Representative Art,” in Alfonso Archi and Rita Francia, *Atti del VI congresso internazionale di ittologia* (Rome: CNR—Istituto di studi sulle civiltà dell’Egeo e del vicino oriente. 2008).
- ⁵⁹ I thank Tallay Ornan for these important remarks.
- ⁶⁰ Bendt Alster, *Dumuzi’s Dream: Aspects of Oral Poetry in a Sumerian Myth* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1972), 75; Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Harps that Once... Sumerian Poetry in*

- Translation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 43; Yitzhak Sefati, *Love Songs in Sumerian Literature: Critical Edition of the Dumuzi-Inanna Songs* (Bar-Ilan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1998), 36 and 137.
- ⁶¹ Richard E. Averbeck, *A Preliminary Study of Ritual and Structure in the Cylinders of Gudea* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1987), 703–704.
- ⁶² Shlomo Izre'el, "New Readings in the Amarna Versions of Adapa and Nergal and Ereškigal," in Anson F. Rainey (ed.), *kinattūtu ša dārāti: Raphael Kutscher Memorial Volume* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1993), 58–65; Shlomo Izre'el, *The Amarna Scholarly Tablets* (Groningen: Styx, 1997), 51–61.
- ⁶³ Oliver R. Gurney, "The Sultantepe Tablets: VII. The Myth of Nergal and Ereshkigal," *Anatolian Studies* 10 (1960): 127.
- ⁶⁴ Inferiority also noted for the goddess in her consort's lap by Ornan 2010, 129. For the icon of a child sitting in his mother's lap in the script and its meaning, see Arlette David, "The *nmh* and the Paradox of the Voiceless in the Eloquent Peasant," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 97 (2011): 77–78; the figure sitting in the lap of another (god, king, queen, tutor, nurse) is assimilated to a child, even when it is a royal one.
- ⁶⁵ Arnold 1996, 97 and n.79.
- ⁶⁶ Fitzenreiter 2008, 108 n.3.
- ⁶⁷ Cf. Roeder 1958, 50–52 for the motifs of sitting in the lap and the "kiss" as visual expressions of political recognition of the throne's heir and his installation in office.
- ⁶⁸ See also in the "durbar" scene of Year 12 in the tomb of *Mryr*^c II in Amarna (Davies 1905, pls. 37–38).
- ⁶⁹ Bickel 2007.
- ⁷⁰ Talatat 12–3042, 27–18, 27–119, courtesy of Robert Vergniew, *Base Talatat (ArcheoGRID)* (Bordeaux: CNRS, 2006–2011); Günther Roeder, *Amarna-Reliefs aus Hermopolis: Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Hermopolis-Expedition in Hermopolis 1929-1939* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1969), PC 61, pl. 179 and 251 pl. 208; Luxor J.210 (Freed, Markowitz and D'Auria 1999, no. 29); Ray W. Smith and Donald B. Redford, *The Akhenaten Temple Project I: Initial Discoveries* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1976), 132 and 135 fig. 24, pls. 66 and 71.2); Amarna tombs of *P³rnnfr* and *Hwy³* (Davies 1908, pl.6; 1905, pls. 4–7); Lise Manniche, "Les scènes de musique sur les talatat du IX^e pylone de Karnak," *Kêmi* 21 (1971): 155–164; Lyn Green, "The Origins of the Giant Lyre and Asiatic Influences on the Cult of the Aten," *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 23 (1996): 56–62.
- ⁷¹ Green 1996, 56.
- ⁷² Smith and Redford 1976, 132 n. 83.
- ⁷³ Green 1996; Julien De Vos, "La grande lyre symétrique en Egypte: A propos des instruments de musique orientaux employés à l'époque amarnienne," *Colloquium Anatolicum* 3 (2004): 200; Julien De Vos, "Amour, musique et poésie au gré des relations égypto-hittites: Réflexions autour d'une statuette de harpiste 'hittite' de Médinet el-Gourob/Miour," in Isabelle Klock-Fontanille, Séverine Bietlot, Karine Meshoub (eds.), *Identité et altérité culturelles: le cas des Hittites dans le Proche-Orient ancien. Actes de colloque, Université de Limoges 27–28 novembre 2008* (Bruxelles: Safran, 2010), 93–114; Francis Breyer, *Ägypten und Anatolien: Politische, kulturelle und sprachliche Kontakte zwischen dem Niltal und Kleinasien im 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), 478–480; Ricardo Eichmann, "Musik und Migration," in Ricardo Eichmann and Hermann Parzinger *Migration und Kulturtransfer: Der Wandel vorder- und zentralasiatischer Kulturen im Umbruch vom 2. zum 1. vorchristlichen Jahrtausend, Akten des Internationalen Kolloquiums Berlin, 23. bis 26. November 1999* (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt, 2001), 480.
- ⁷⁴ Leo Steinberg, "Michelangelo's Florentine Pietà: The Missing Leg," *The Art Bulletin* 50 (1968): 344.
- ⁷⁵ Beryl Barr-Sharrar, *The Derveni Krater: Masterpiece of Classical Greek Metalwork* (Princeton: ASCSA Publications, 2008), 119–122.
- ⁷⁶ Barr-Sharrar 2008, 122.
- ⁷⁷ Steinberg 1968, 347.
- ⁷⁸ Mereruka's tomb, Dynasty 6 (Prentice Duell, *The Mastaba of Mereruka I* [Chicago: Oriental Institute Publications, 1938], pl. 94); Karnak talatat, reign of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten (Traunecker 1986, fig. 11).

- ⁷⁹ Temple of Ramses III in Medinet Habu (Charles F. Nims, *The Eastern High Gate* [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970], pls. 639–640 and 646); Akhenaten and Nefertiti in the Amarna tomb of *P3rnmfr* (Davies 1908, pl. 3).
- ⁸⁰ Tomb of Khety in Beni Hasan, Dynasty 11 in Richard Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien, nach den Zeichnungen der von Seiner Majestät dem Könige von Preussen Friedrich Wilhelm IV. nach diesen Ländern gesendeten und in den Jahren 1842–1845 ausgeführten wissenschaftlichen Expedition II* (Berlin: Nicolaische Buchhandlung, 1849), pl. 143b.
- ⁸¹ Papyrus Turin 55001, Dynasty 20 (Jos A. Omlin, *Der Papyrus 55001 und seine Satirisch-erotischen Zeichnungen und Inschriften* [Turin: Fratelli Pozzo, 1973]).
- ⁸² Steinberg 1968, 350; 1970, 272 carefully distinguishes slung-leg, lap-sitting, and legs intertwining in his study.